Can I Dye My Hair With Psoriasis?

by BRENDA VANTA

Psoriasis and Hair Dye

Do you want to dye your hair, but are concerned about your psoriasis?

If you have psoriasis, particularly on the scalp, the chemicals in hair dye are more likely to irritate your already inflamed and broken skin and could cause an allergic reaction.

However, the National Psoriasis Foundations says that most psoriasis suffers can dye their hair without too many problems. Consider the following tips to reduce an aggravation or a flare-up lesion further.

Things to Keep in Mind About Psoriasis and Hair Dye

Wait for a Flare-Up to Go Away

It's impossible to predict when and if psoriasis is going to show up, but it's a good idea to book your hair appointment when you're not experiencing a flare-up.

If this means postponing your appointment at the last minute because you've had a flare-up a day or two beforehand, so be it. It's better to be safe and not be in more pain thanks to any chemicals present in the dye.

Talk to Your Hairdresser

Although your hairdresser may not be an expert on psoriasis, they'll be very knowledgeable about what's in the products they're using. They will, no doubt, be able to advise what sorts of products are better for sensitive skin.

Try Some Natural Tips for Less Drastic Results

If you're just considering a subtle change to your hair color, you could always try some alternatives that won't make such a drastic change. Give baking soda a go.

- Mix baking soda with water and apply it to your hair (doesn't matter if it's wet or dry)
- Go outside and find a patch of sunlight to sit in with a book
- Chill out for at least 30 minutes
- Wash it out
- See if there are any results

Essentially, this process is thought to lighten your hair a bit. Worth a shot, right?

The other idea is to use honey, tea or lemon juice to lighten your hair up a bit. Just do the same thing:

- Apply it to your hair
- Sit in the sunshine
- Look for results

Use Henna Dye as a Hair Dye Alternative

You can order henna hair dye from many places online. I know here in New Zealand you can get a variety of shades from Lush. Henna is another natural alternative to your standard hair dye.

It's a plant called Lawsonia inermis, and depending on the henna hair dye you use, there are no chemicals involved. Just be aware that it's not recommended to use other synthetic products on top of henna, so if you choose henna, you may be stuck with the results for a little while.

There's also no predicted outcome with henna as it all depends on your hair color at the time of dying — every henna experience is likely to be different.

Don't Forget to Patch Test

This is a suggestion everybody should adhere to regardless of whether they have to deal with psoriasis or not, but it's especially important for those with psoriasis to do.

Doing a strand test, or a patch test, will, first of all, check that the color outcome is what you're expecting, but also give you an indication of whether the dye is going to induce a flare-up or not.

If you're trying out dying during a flare-up, it will show you how it'll affect your current flare-up. It may seem time-consuming, but you won't regret it if it turns out that you will experience a flare-up due to the chemicals near your skin.

Next page: Additional tips on psoriasis and hair dye, and how to maintain your hair color.

Things to Keep in Mind About Psoriasis and Hair Dye

Use Petroleum Jelly Around Your Hairline

This is probably something everyone should do when dying their hair anyway as it stops the dye staining your forehead and anywhere else the dye comes in contact with.

Just line your hairline with a petroleum jelly–based product, and apply the dye as usual. It will act as a barrier between your skin and the dye, while also doubling up as a handy moisturizer to keep your skin protected.

Supply Your Own Dye

If you've dyed your hair a few times before, and you've found a product that works for you, it may be a good idea to either take it with you or give your hairdresser a heads-up and see if they can supply that particular product to use on your hair.

It's better than taking the risk and using a different product that may have an undesirable effect on your skin.

How to Make Your Own Homemade Hair Dye

You can prepare your hair dye and use it in the comfort of your home, using all natural ingredients. Remember to do a test spot on your skin first, because natural ingredients can also cause skin irritation and allergic reactions.

Here is one recipe, recommended by J.M. Johnson, author of the book "Old-Time Country Wisdom & Lore: 1000s

of Traditional Skills for Simple Living."

1. For dark brown color, take black walnuts – either pick them in the summer when the hulls are still soft and green or buy them from a health food store
2. Pry the shells open and press the juice into a jar. Makes sure you wear gloves, to avoid stains on your hands.
3. Stir in a small amount of powdered cloves and a few drops of purified alcohol. Keep the jar closed and allow the mixture to steep for seven days.
4. You may want to shake the jar occasionally.
5. After one week, you can pour the jar's contents through a porous cloth to remove any large particles.
6. Put the mixture in a bottle, and add some salt to preserve it. Use it when you need, by applying it to the hair (avoid touching the scalp).

If you prefer a darker brown or black, you have to mix the juice of green walnut hulls with Neat's foot oil (one part of oil to four parts of juice).

Maintain Your Color With Products That Are Skin-Sensitive

There's plenty of shampoos and conditioners that are perfect for keeping your psoriasis calm, but these products can be harsh on your color.

However, there are several sensitive-skin products out there that can keep your vibrant color while also keeping your psoriasis at bay. Look for products that suggest they are suitable for sensitive skin while also maintaining color — a pretty tricky mix, but there are some out there.

I've had psoriasis flare-ups on and off for as long as I can remember, and it's all a matter of experimentation to get the right products that work for you.

Over the last year, I decided to dye my hair, which was a terrifying decision, but I'm happy to say that it doesn't cause a reaction for me, and the color-care products I use keep my color nice and vibrant without affecting my psoriasis.

However, if I do have a flare-up, I won't get my color touched up until it's settled. Don't let psoriasis stop you from expressing yourself through your hair color — just be prepared to try out a few products and processes until you find a dying process that works for you.